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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 DUBLIN 000042

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [KPAO](#) [IZ](#) [EI](#)
SUBJECT: IRISH-IRAQI RESIDENT RETURNS TO DUBLIN AFTER IRAQ
CAPTIVE ORDEAL

Classified By: POL/ECON CHIEF MARY E. DALY, FOR REASONS 1.4 (B), (D)

¶1. (C) On December 24, the leader of the opposition in Ireland called the Ambassador seeking information about the detention in Baghdad of Ahmed Abbas Naji Khursheed, the brother of Irish citizen Dr. Nizar Naji Khursheed (an MD practicing in respiratory care in Ireland). Emboff met with the now freed victim and his brother in Dublin to get their story before they take it to the Irish press and political leaders. The below report is as relayed to emboff by Khursheed. Post cannot verify the veracity of this information, but passes it along in case it would be helpful to colleagues elsewhere.

Timeline of Kidnapping

¶2. (C) Ahmed Abbas Naji Khursheed (AKA Ahmed Abbas Kurchied) says that he accompanied his elderly mother on December 18 from Damascus to Baghdad via car. On the 21st he visited his brother, Khalid Abbas Naji Khursheed, in the middle-class Hay Badr (Badr neighborhood) in the Al Jihad district of Baghdad, where he witnessed a police raid on a neighbor's house. Six to seven masked policemen, some in blue uniforms and some in desert khakis raided the home of ABDULLAH (last name unknown), a former employee in one of Saddam Hussein's palaces, according to Khursheed. They carried a list that included the names of ABDULLAH and his three brothers. Upon confirmation of the identities of the three brothers by a man called AL WAHASH, the three men were taken from the house and forced into Iraqi Ministry of Interior Land Cruisers and blue and white police cars. These vehicles did not have license plates.

¶3. (C) Upon witnessing this raid, Khursheed was advised by his brother to leave Iraq immediately. He then crossed the street to say good-bye to his sister and her husband, Nathem Mohammed Isma'eel. The police commandos, who had circled the block and were raiding another house, saw Khursheed crossing the street. (Khursheed said it is possible that they thought he was informing others about the raids). Despite pleas of innocence, both he and Isma'eel were handcuffed, blindfolded and forced into one of the Land Cruisers.

¶4. (C) During the next two days, family members reported that police picked up some 57 people in the same neighborhood. Some of those picked up reportedly were leaders of Sunni political parties.

Interrogation and Ransom

¶5. (C) Khursheed and Isma'eel were driven approximately 45

minutes to the North of Baghdad. They were held and questioned in a makeshift, bombed, interrogation center. They remained handcuffed and blindfolded. They were told that they would be released, but instead they were put into the back of a Kia model minivan and driven for 15 minutes to a house. The house was inhabited by a family with one boy and one girl and contained an interrogation room on the roof.

¶6. (C) During the course of continued interrogations, a low-ranking officer told Khursheed that he could be ransomed for \$60,000. He then called another of Khursheed's brothers, Mohammed (now in Syria) and demanded the money. Khursheed said that he could raise no more than \$2,500.

Interrogation room

¶7. (C) Khursheed and Isma'eel were placed into a cramped closet on the roof. There they stayed for about twelve days. They were denied use of toilet facilities, and remained blindfolded and handcuffed to each other. The first day, Khursheed was given only one date to eat and a minimal amount of water to drink. During the time he was imprisoned, he usually received only a small piece of bread and just "a few drops" of water per day.

¶8. (C) The room, which measured less than 1.5 square meters, was crowded further when a man by the name of Mahmoud was thrown in with them. Mahmoud, of Al Musayeb in Babel was captured in the Al Washash area of Baghdad. He is a Sunni cleric with nine children and, according to Khursheed, under the duress of continual beatings confessed to membership in insurgency groups (possibly in a group called the Islamic

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Army). As Mahmoud's mobile phone was on intercom mode, Khursheed heard that his wife would sell their home to try and pay the ransom demand of \$100,000.

Location of Detention House

¶9. (C) Due to the time it took to travel and the location of roundabouts and bridges he crossed, Khursheed suspects he was held in a house in the Al Sadr or Al Habibia areas. From the detention room, he could hear Shia Islamic calls to prayer and believes that he was held near one of the three Shia mosques in the area. The house was also near a main road and he heard boys playing soccer in a nearby lot. He heard a generator running nearby as well. The roof was covered by a green tarpaulin to hide the movements of the detainees during the day.

Charges of Torture

¶10. (C) Khursheed says that he and Isma'eel were regularly interrogated and beaten, especially when they complained about the pain from the handcuffs or their detention conditions. Khursheed's injuries from beatings include a dislocated shoulder and possible nerve damage in his fingers from the shackles. He also has a large and deep wound on the bridge of his nose that may require cosmetic surgery to repair. He was beaten daily with metal bars. He also had a wet pillow placed over his face while a policeman pressed it into his face with his foot. (Note: Emboff personally viewed the gash on the nose and cuts in wrists from being shackled. These wounds are notable even a week after his release).

¶11. (C) Khursheed believes that he and Isma'eel were beaten to ensure their silence prior to the visit of a carpenter and welder called to secure the locks on the doors. Isma'eel received the worst of the beatings. They were both hit with metal rods, but the more Isma'eel screamed the more he was

beaten to keep him quiet. Khursheed suspects that Isma'eel has broken ribs. When he was last with him, he was in a great deal of pain and having difficulty breathing.

¶12. (C) After 12 days, they were returned to the makeshift detention center, where Khursheed heard prisoners being burned, threatened with electric shocks and power tools, and lifted by their feet with a mechanical device.

Released

¶13. (C) Two days after the return of Khursheed to the detention facility, a man addressed as a colonel ordered his release due to lack of evidence. The more junior officers failed to follow the order and kept him for two more days after which the colonel returned, inquired as to his identity and demanded his released.

¶14. (C) The day before his release, the policemen in the detention hid all the prisoners in a backroom. Khursheed suspects that American troops may have visited the center, and the police did not want them to see the conditions of their detainees.

¶15. (C) On January 5 Khursheed was taken about 12 minutes away to a site on Palestine Street near the Ministry of the Interior and released. With the help of friends and family, he left Iraq, traveled to Syria and is now in Dublin. He still has no word on the status of Isma'eel.

Identifying the Captors

¶16. (C) Khursheed said he was constantly blindfolded and in the original raid, the captors wore masks. The only identifying feature he saw of the captors was that one of the chief officers had distinctive green eyes. Per above, Al Wahash is the name of either a policeman or an Al Jihad neighborhood informant. Two of the captors present during beatings were referred to as Abu Haider and Walid. All had accents of the south, possibly Nasiriyah, or of the Sadr city area of Baghdad.

Prior run-ins of Khursheed and Isma'eel

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¶17. (C) Khursheed was granted refugee status in Ireland in 2001 and carries an Irish passport. He was in the Iraqi military before Gulf War I, but was re-conscripted during the invasion of Kuwait. He later deserted and was detained and beaten for six days after the war. Khursheed currently works as an auto mechanic in Dublin. Isma'eel was arrested by Iraqi police seven months ago on charges related to connections to Abu Musab Al Zarqawi, but turned over to and released by American forces for lack of evidence.

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